



ILLINOIS HIGHER
EDUCATION
C E N T E R

for alcohol, other drug
& violence prevention

INSIDE

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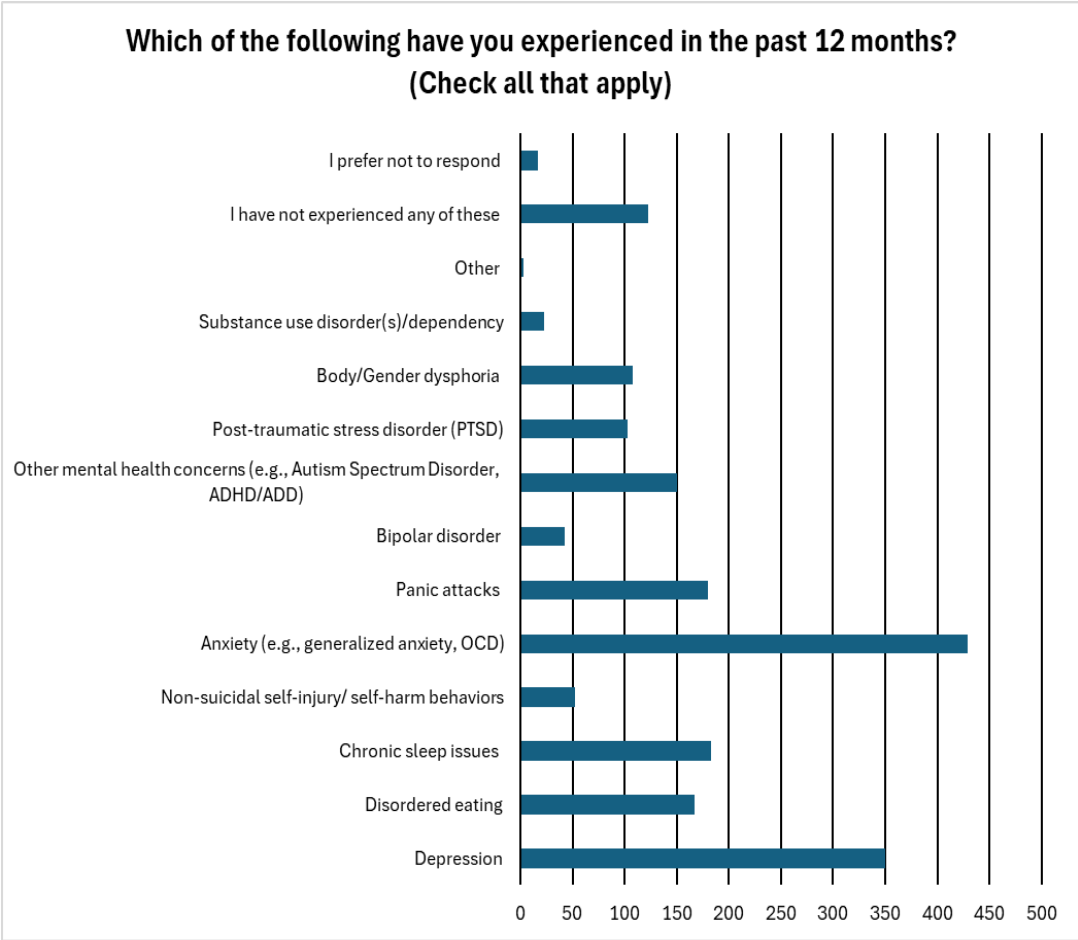
Summary and Resources (p.6)

2024 IACSUB Survey Findings on Mental Health and Retention in Higher Education

The Illinois Assessment of College Substance Use Behaviors (IACSUB) survey drew information from 705 participants spanning six colleges and universities across the State of Illinois. The purpose of the survey was to identify substance use behaviors among college students, such as frequency, location, and reasons for use. In this way stakeholders will be more able to identify substance use challenges in higher education and their related communities. Students were asked questions pertaining to alcohol, cannabis, and tobacco, as well as other drugs.

This brief will address the mental health of students and their thoughts and attitudes related to their schools and communities. First this brief will examine what mental illnesses students experience and what if any they have been diagnosed with. Then, it will review the findings related to mental health treatment and services the students have access to. Finally, the IACSUB survey data pertaining to students' thoughts toward school will be explored.

Figure 6.1



Which mental illnesses have students experienced? (Past 12-months)

When asked what mental illnesses the students in the survey had experienced, the most common answer was anxiety which accounted for 22.2% of the total 1931 question responses ($n=429$). Depression received another 18.1% of responses ($n=350$).

Which mental illnesses have students been diagnosed with? (past 12-months)

The mental illness diagnosed most frequently was “anxiety disorder(s)”, accounting for 25.2% of the total 929 question responses. The second most frequently diagnosed mental illness was “Major Depression” which received 15.9% of the responses ($n=148$). Additionally, 22.2% of responses ($n=206$) indicated not being diagnosed with any mental illness listed in the past 12 months.

Figure 6.2

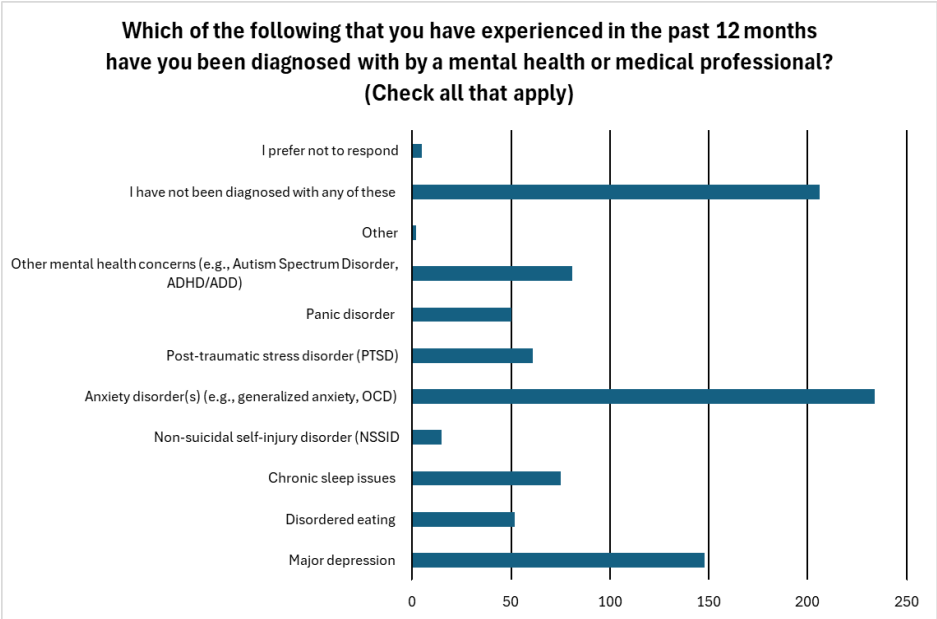
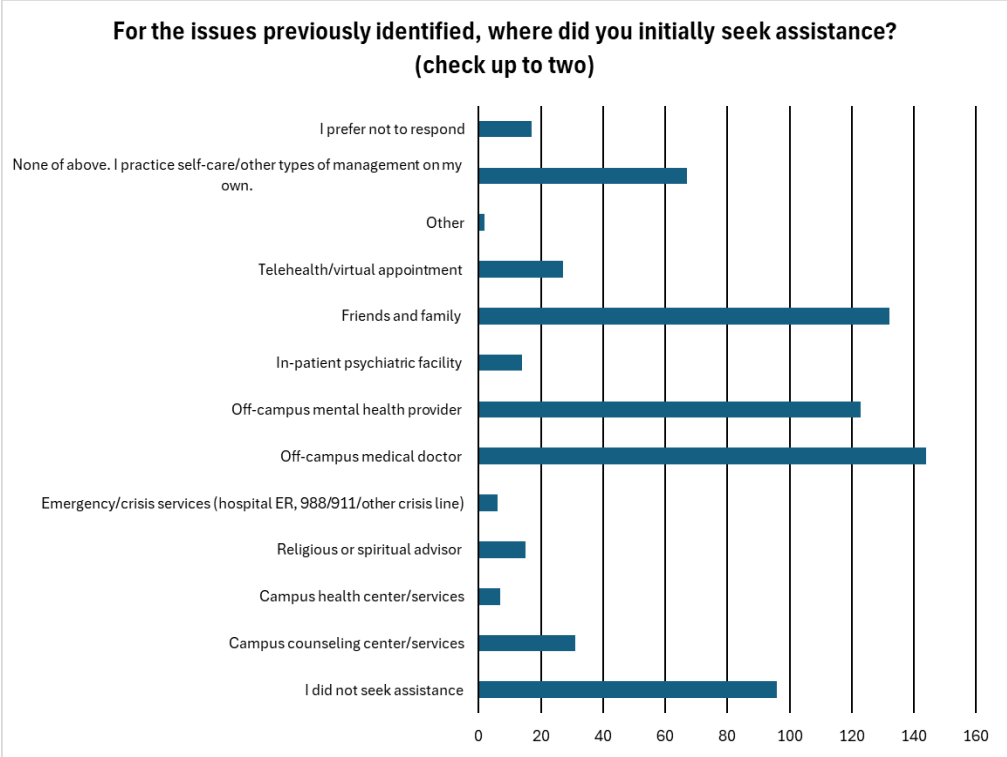


Figure 6.3



Where did students initially seek treatment?

A total of 681 responses were received when participants were asked where they initially sought treatment for mental health concerns. The most common responses were “off-campus medical doctor” 21.1% ($n=144$), “friends and family” 19.4% ($n=132$), and “off-campus mental health provider” 18% ($n=123$).

Figure 6.4

What other services did students utilize?

When asked about other services students utilized when experiencing mental health concerns, 36.6% ($n=156$) of 426 total responses indicated the utilization of friends and family.

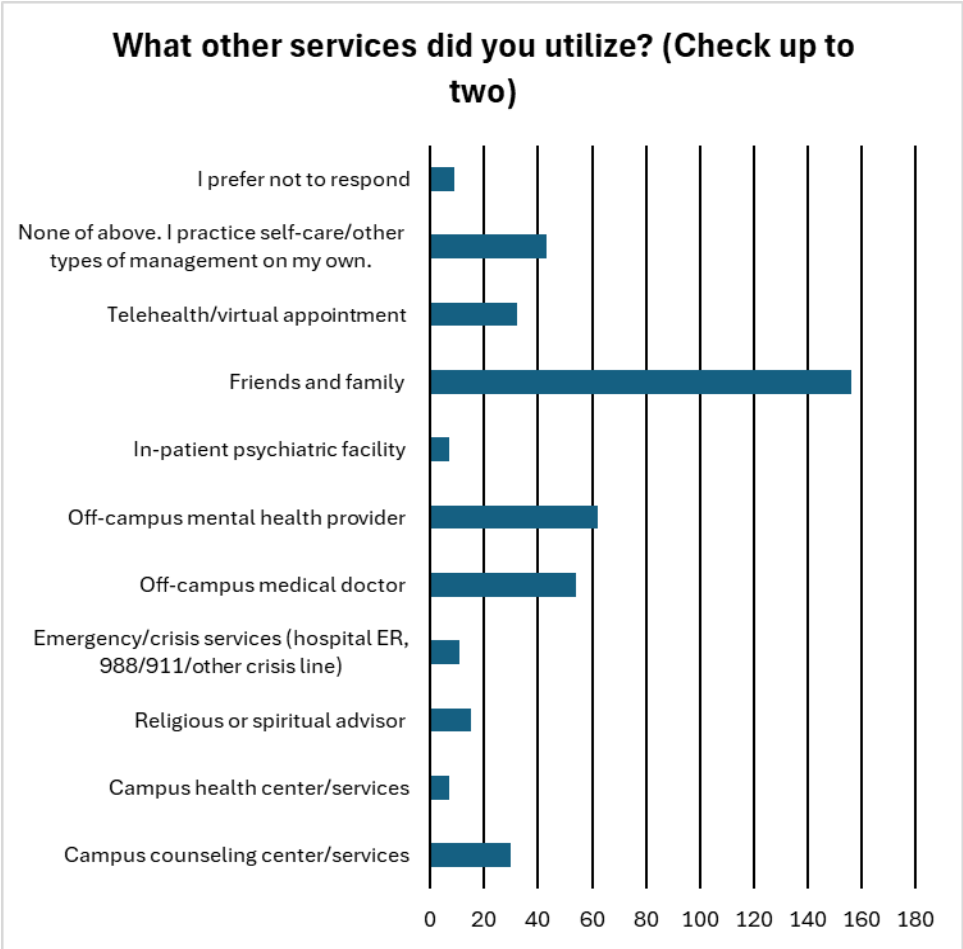
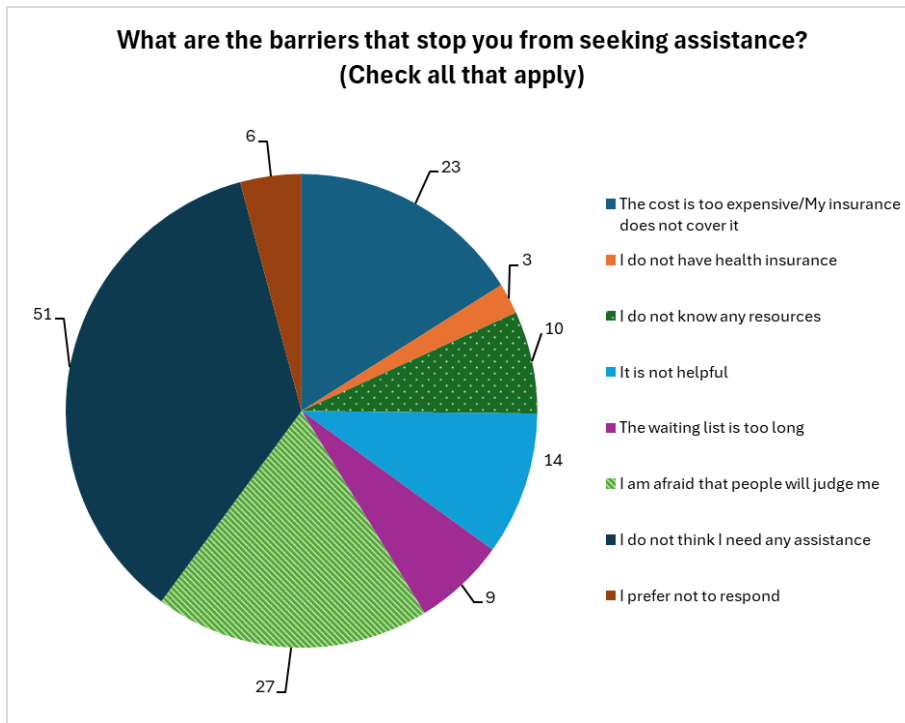


Figure 6.5



What barriers kept students from seeking assistance?

Of the 143 responses given, 35.7% stated they did not think they needed assistance ($n=51$). Another 18.9% of responses received ($n=27$) were that they were afraid people would judge them. The third most common answer given was "the cost is too expensive/my insurance does not cover it" which received 16% of total responses ($n=23$).

Did students consider transferring schools? (past 12-month)

Students were asked whether they had considered transferring to a different college or university in the last year. Of the 642 students who responded, 60% ($n=385$) said no; while 37% of respondents ($n=239$) stated that they had considered transferring schools.

Figure 6.6

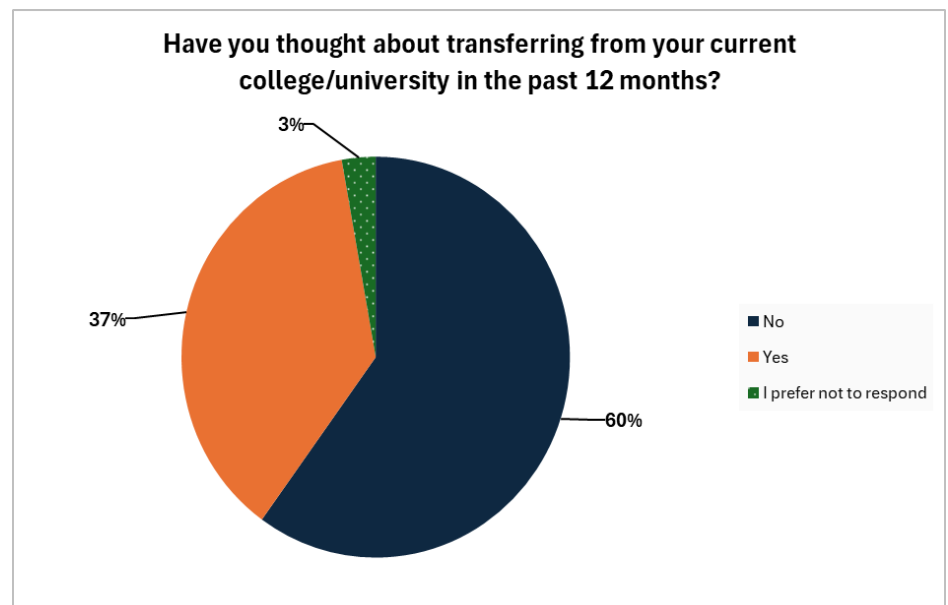
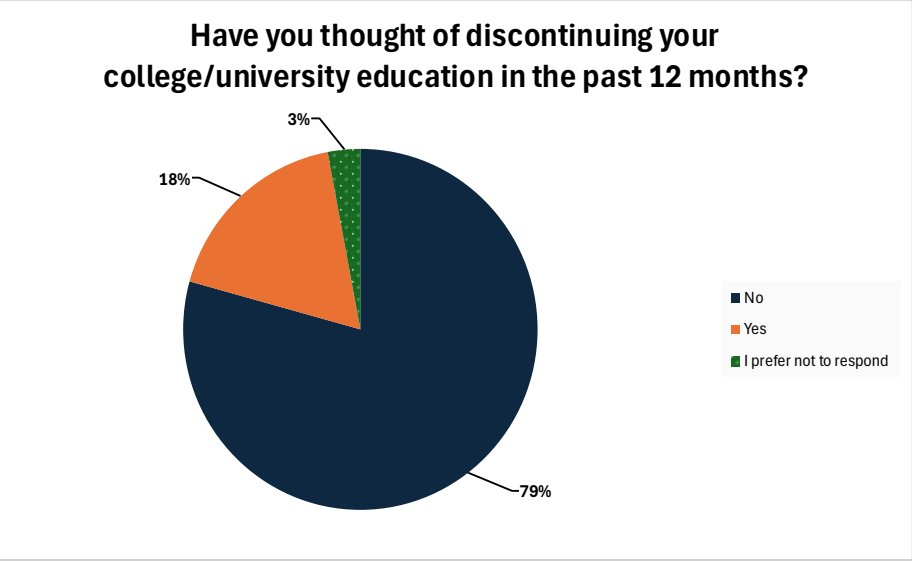


Figure 6.7



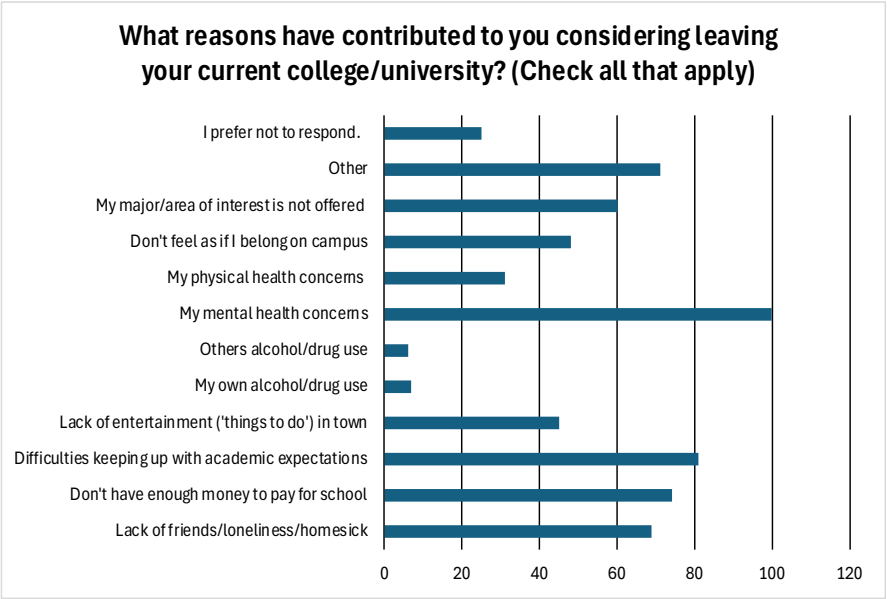
Did students consider quitting school? (past 12-month)

When asked if they had considered discontinuing their education in the last year, 79% of respondents ($n=509$) stated that they had not. The students who indicated that they had considered discontinuing made up 18% ($n=114$) of total participants.

Did students consider quitting school? (past 12-month)

When asked if they had considered discontinuing their education in the last year, 79% of respondents ($n=509$) stated that they had not. The students who indicated that they had considered discontinuing made up 18% ($n=114$) of total participants.

Figure 6.8



Summary

The most common mental illnesses for Illinois college students to experience or be diagnosed with were anxiety and depression. When students chose to reach out for help, they were most likely to look for it from off-campus medical doctors and mental health providers as well as friends and family. The main obstacles standing in the way of students seeking help for their mental health concerns were thoughts that they did not need help and fear of being judged by others for doing so. The majority of students in the survey have not considered transferring or quitting school but those who have attributed mental health concerns as the main reason for doing so.

Resources

Illinois Higher Education Center (2024).
Reprint of IACSUB Survey. *Statewide AOD Survey*, 1-78.

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